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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQ EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE, OCTOBER 26

Classified By: Charles P. Ries for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

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¶1. (C) Summary. On 26 October, in the absence of Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki, National Security Advisor Dr. Muwfaq Rubai chaired the Baghdad Security Plan (Fardh al Qanoon ) FAQ) Executive Steering Committee (I-ESC) of the Government of Iraq (GoI). The Meeting featured a reading of the proposed draft Executive Order to empower the new Ahmed Chalabi Services Committee and a wide ranging discussion of Baghdad's fuel situation which highlighted the challenges of transporting refined products to the city. NSA Rubaie's staff, with the cooperation of Baghdad Commander General Aboud and Minister of Oil Shahrستاني, announced a plan to station Baghdad Operations Command Officers at oil depots and filling stations to keep an audit trail of kerosene loadings and deliveries. This should improve availability of all oil products in neighborhoods (gasoline availability is already noticeably better).

Chalabi Service Committee Draft Executive Order Discussed  
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¶2. (C) NSA Rubaie briefed the Executive Order that he has prepared for PM Maliki that, if signed, would give new FaQ Service Committee Chair Ahmed Chalabi significant authority. It is unknown when the Order will be presented to PM Maliki for signature. NSA Rubaie highlighted the following aspects of the Order:

-The Services Committee would consist of the Deputy NSA, the Amanat, the Baghdad Operations Command and appointed and empowered deputy representatives of, respectively, the Ministries of Defense, Interior, Finance, Oil, Health, Electricity, Trade, and Transportation. (Note: After a comment by Baghdad Provincial Chair Mueen, Rubaie amended the Order to also include a representative from the Baghdad Governor's Office. End Note.)

-The Services Committee will work in coordination with Baghdad Province.

-The Services Committee will be authorized to: 1) Coordinate between various entities of the GoI, 2) Instruct them to do their job, 3) Issue solutions to any problems that are preventing service delivery; 4) Field complaints from citizens; 5) Set priorities for service improvements; 6) Keep internally displaced people in mind when addressing service improvements.

-All ministries must cooperate with the Service Committee with regard to needed financial support to improve services. (Comment: Rubaie stated at the I-ESC pre-meeting that the Services Committee would not be given its own budget, as this "was not necessary." End Comment).

13. (C) I-ESC Secretary Saeed Ng, a member of NSA Rubaie's staff, presented a study and tracking slides of private and government fuel stations in Baghdad that highlighted that storage depots have excess capacity because insufficient supplies of refined products are making their way to Baghdad.

(Comment. Typically only MNF-I creates and distributes this sort of tracking slide at the I-ESC. Albeit created with Embassy encouragement, this is the first known such slide study created and distributed in this forum by a member of the GoI. Notable praise was given by Rubaie and CG Petraeus. End Comment.)

14. (C) Commander of Baghdad, General Aboud, discussed a new Baghdad Operations Command (BOC) plan to reduce militia involvement in black market kerosene sales. The plan, stemming from meeting in early October with DPM Salih and Minister of Oil Sharistani, will track wholesale fuel delivery trucks by having 2 BOC officers present at each of the Karkh and Rusafa fuel depots and distributions yards to monitor outgoing and incoming trucks. (Comment. This effort should help reduce the number of trucks going missing. However, at a meeting in early October, Minister Sharistani told Embassy officers that militants are far more involved in sales to end point customers than they are in theft of trucks from depot to yard. End Comment.)

15. (C) Noting that "people are very content at gas stations," that militia involvement with fuel has decreased in Karkh and that the black market price of propane has dropped sharply in the city, Minister Sharistani gave a long summary of the fuel situation in Baghdad in which he stated that it has improved some in recent months, but that the overall fuel situation will continue to be hampered until more refined products can

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be brought to Baghdad. Once again Sharistani singled out the off-line pipeline from Iraq's largest refinery in Bayji as essential to solving Baghdad's fuel woes. (Comment: Bayji is approximately 250 KM from Baghdad. The pipeline, which runs through predominantly Sunni areas, is said to have more than 4000 holes. End Comment.) Sharistani also complained that neither Iraq's other governmental ministries nor Baghdad's citizens are doing their part to come and pick up fuel from the Ministry of Oil's (MoO) refineries and storage depots. (Comment. Sharistani has long held a "we make it, you come pick it up" view of responsibilities for the Ministry of Oil. End Comment.)

16. (C) In response to Sharistani comments that the MNF-I was preventing the MoO from repairing a 10" pipeline to the South of Baghdad, CG Petraeus pointed out that the pipeline had already been repaired and pressurized two days ago and that facilitating repair of key infrastructure is always a priority for the MNF-I.

17. (C) Ahmed Chalabi noted that terrorists continue to try and isolate Baghdad through the provision of fuel and urged that increases use of trucks, rail and pipelines be made to deliver refined products to Baghdad. In response, Sharistani stated that he welcomed all efforts to deliver more product to Baghdad, noting that the Ministry of Transport had informed him that the Basra to Baghdad railroad is now operations and that the Ministry of Oil would soon be receiving shipment of 300 more fuel trucks.

18. (C) In response to Sharistani comments of corruption and collusion with militias by neighborhood councils, the Governor of Baghdad challenged Sharistani to provide him an official letter with names of those involved so that he could investigate and take action. The Governor also urged that Baghdad's allocation of fuel be separated out from the other central provinces and stated that fuel canisters received of late have been 15% lighter than normal. The Governor also

noted that his office was in the midst of creating a new fuel card, to be ready in 6 weeks, that would help cut down on corruption.

¶9. (C) Baghdad Provincial Chair Mueen complained that despite Sharistani's statements that fully 60% of the first of two 100 L allotments (per family) of winter kerosene has been delivered to Baghdad families, he himself has received no kerosene and that in any event the promised 200 L is insufficient for the winter. In response, Sharistani stated that despite an intensive media campaign, including announcements on television, Baghdad's residents have been slow in coming to pick up their kerosene. He asked Mueen if the Province was really "serious" in its stated desire to assume responsibility for Kerosene delivery, as the Province had not picked up any part of its first allotment of 10 million L from the Ministry of Oil.

#### Tigris River Bridge Repair Dispute

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¶10. (C) The I-ESC discussed the issue of a dispute between the Ministry of Water Resources and the Baghdad Amanat over delays in the rebuilding of the Hwy 1 (Mosul Road) bridge that crosses the Grand Canal north of Baghdad. Insurgents have dropped or damaged many of the bridges heading north out of Baghdad making this particular bridge rebuild of strategic significance. The bridge is near Taji and therefore outside of the normal areas of responsibility for the Baghdad Amanat, but the Amanat agreed to rebuild the bridge at the request of PM Maliki. The Ministry of Water provided the Amanat with a suggested design plan for the bridge, using a series of culverts, which included a cost of 18 million Iraqi dinars. The Amanat had its own design team look at the plan and came up with their own design which would cost 9 million Iraqi dinars and which they are now in the final stages of constructing. In order to begin construction on the bridge, the Ministry of Water had to reduce the flow on that portion of the river, causing a reduction in water levels at a dam that provides electricity to Samarra.

¶11. (C) During the I-ESC meeting, the representative of the Ministry of Water complained that the Amanat had not shared the designs for the re-designed bridge under construction, and therefore the Ministry of Water remained unsure of its structural integrity and whether it would allow a sufficient amount of water to pass underneath it. The representative also noted that the continued burden of having to limit flow on that portion of the river could cause a significant drop in electricity to Samarra if continued much longer.

¶12. In an occasionally heated series of exchanges, the Mayor first tried to deny his responsibility for completing the project and then guaranteed that the construction process would allow the sufficient amount of water to pass through,

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concluding by stating that the project would be "completed soon."

¶13. (C) Discussion closed on the issue by NSA Rubaie instructing the Amanat to share the new design and by insisting that the Minister of Water and the Amanat meet to coordinate and increase progress on the bridge. He said that the issue will be revisited next week.  
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